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DECEMBER 15, 2023 | VOLUME 14 | ISSUE 26

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Fuller Bridge sweep reiterates need
for shelter space. **Page 4**



SHAWN
SWOFFER
#574

ASK YOUR
VENDOR:
**WHAT'S THE
BEST CHRIST-
MAS SONG?**

GROUND COVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.



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@groundcovernews, include vendor name and vendor #

groundcover news **GIFT GUIDE**

It's the gift-giving time of the year! The holiday season is the perfect time to get something unique and meaningful for the people you care about while also making a difference by supporting artists and makers in the community. Or, better yet, treat yourself to one of these awesome items!

PALMS to POETRY

Teresa Basham, Groundcover vendor No. 570, released her second collection of poetry "Palms to Poetry" was released in mid-December. Find her selling Groundcover News on Liberty St. and inquire about purchasing this new book or her first book "Poems to Poetry"—or both for a discounted rate!

GROUNDCOVER NEWS BRACELETS and EARRINGS

Roberto Isla Caballero, Groundcover vendor No. 347, handmakes jewelery so that customers can show the world how much they love Groundcover News! Find him on the corner of Washington and Main Street in downtown Ann Arbor to see his collection available for purchase.

2023 GROUNDCOVER MAGAZINES

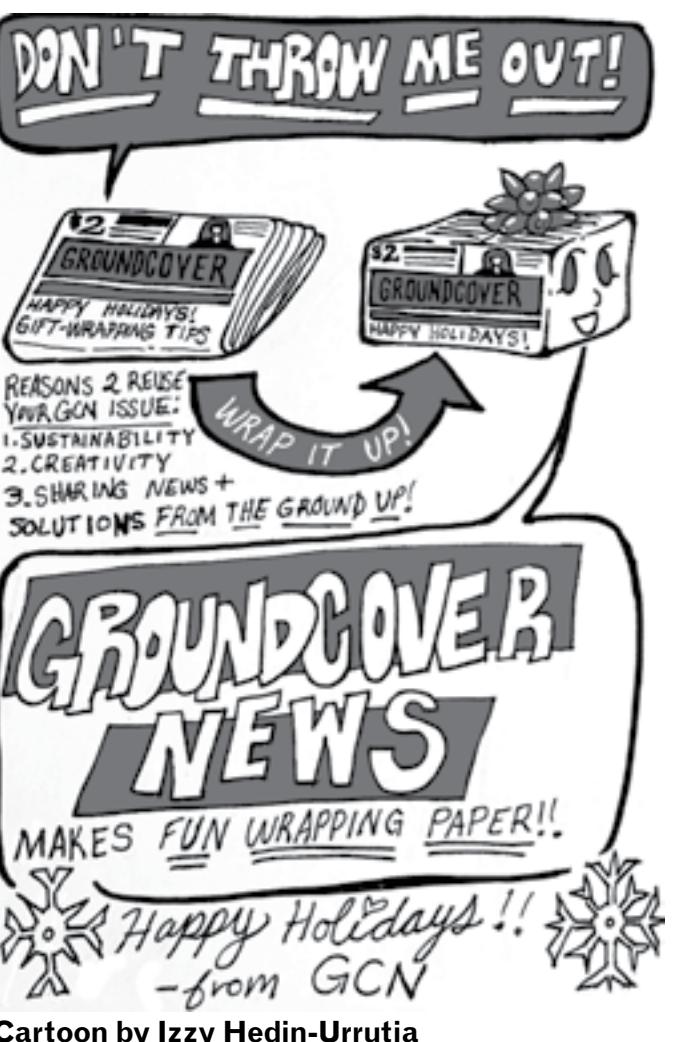
Groundcover News released two magazines this year with timeless content about people in our community—Exceptional Community Member Edition and Vendor Voices.

THE FOLD: a COLLECTION of POETRY

"The Fold" is a work of poetry written by Groundcover writer La Shawn Courtwright. It can be ordered online at blackstonebookstore.com (web shop of Blackstone Ypsilanti Bookstore and Cultural Center).

KUNG FU PANDA'S ARTWORK and JEWELERY

Cindy is a happy-go-lucky creative artist and Groundcover vendor who sells at the Sweetwaters Cafe on Washington St. in downtown A2. You can purchase Cindy's art by attending a showing at the Groundcover News office. Email contact@groundcovernews.com if interested to schedule a date and time to shop in person.

**GROUNDCOVER NEWS**

Groundcover News, a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in April 2010 as a means to empower low-income persons to make the transitions from homeless to housed, and from jobless to employed.

Vendors purchase each copy of our regular editions of Groundcover News at our office for 50 cents. This money goes towards production costs. Vendors work selling the paper on the street for \$2, keeping all income and tips from each sale.

Street papers like Groundcover News exist in cities all over the United States, as well as in more than 40 other countries, in an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people and combat the increase in poverty. Our paper is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

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1/8	\$110.00	\$150.00	5 X 3 or 2.5 X 6.5
1/6	\$145.00	\$200.00	5 X 4
1/4	\$200.00	\$265.00	5 X 6.25
1/2	\$375.00	\$500.00	5 X 13 or 10.25 X 6.5
full page	\$650.00	\$900.00	10.25 X 13

PACKAGE PRICING

Three Months/Six Issues: **15% off**
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Only run for two weeks/one issue: **40% off**
Additional **20%** discount for money saving coupons

ASK YOUR VENDOR

What's the best Christmas song?

"Silent Night" by the Temptations.

— Shawn Swoffer, #574

Hallelujah Requiem.

— Cindy Gere, #279

"This Christmas" by the Whispers.

— Pony Bush, #305

"Feliz Navidad" by Jose Feliciano.

— Roberto Isla Caballero, #347

Nutcracker soundtrack, if anything. I don't really listen to Christmas music but classical stuff is okay.

— James Manning, #16

I have so many it's difficult to select ... "Ain't that A-Rockin?" is a simple, beautiful depiction of Mary and her just-born Son. Their innocence contrasts the cruelty of this world.

— Amanda Gale, #573

"This Christmas" by Donny Hathaway.

— Mike Jones, #113

"Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer."

— Jim Clark, #139

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Getting through the holidays

For those who have lost loved ones, the holidays sometimes can be sad.

Family holiday occasions, too, can sometimes be difficult and sad for everyone — homeless or not, especially for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer community.

A solution?

"Those of us, because we're at a University, we educate people," said Dr. Brenda Riemer, a professor of sports management at Eastern Michigan University. Riemer, who gave a lunchtime presentation for the College of Health and Human Services on Nov. 7 discussing transgender women in sports, was advocating for a future where everyone is able to participate.

The mission statement of Groundcover News states, in part, "to promote action to build a just, caring and inclusive society in Washtenaw County."

Riemer's quote is out of context, but the solution of teaching, caring and inclusiveness is part of each day at Groundcover — not just the holidays.

There is a Jewish prayer that



JANE REILLY
Groundcover vendor No. 611

turns grieving into a proactive process.

"If the desire to continue a relationship with the departed impels you to learn something you otherwise would not have learned, do a mitzvah [good deed] you otherwise would not have done or go higher and further than ever before, then that soul lives on in you."

Becky Sehenuk Waite of Ann Arbor and the Sehenuk family are an example of this prayer in action. They created jennysehenuk.com and Jenny Sehenuk Day, Oct. 10, in remembrance of Becky's twin sister, Jenny, 29, of Santa Clarita Valley, California, who died in a motorcycle accident on Oct. 10,

2010.

Clever signs are posted annually around Ann Arbor and wherever there are Sehenuk friends. For example, "Jenny Sehenuk counted to infinity. Twice," and "If you spell Jenny Sehenuk in Scrabble, you win. Forever."

Why is Jenny Sehenuk, pronounced see-hen-nook, important?

Let's allow Sehenuk to answer for herself from jennysehenuk.com:

"We're all the same in one way or another," Sehenuk said.

Sehenuk Waite knows if you spell love in Scrabble you spell Jenny Sehenuk. Love wins. Forever.

A holiday gift for the Sehenuk Family and all Groundcover readers: Paul McKenna has a free online video called "I Can Make You Happy," which is hypnotism with subliminal messages that make you more cheerful. Two other free internet companies, Vortex Success and 30 Minute Mindset, have scripts so you can read the offered subliminal messages. Spirit Tribe Awakening is free, peaceful and powerful music. Peace on Earth, Good Will to All.

From the desk of Panda: Loneliness epidemic and how to beat it

CINDY GERE
Groundcover vendor No. 279

3. Help at the local dog shelter.
4. Help the homeless community by volunteering

5. List all the things you want to do and join an online group of people who share one of your interests. I always wanted to go ghost hunting or take a CPR class.

6. Join an event-planning group such as the Fourth of July parade committee or the Ann Arbor powwow planning committee. Or any of the groups or activities listed in the Crazy Wisdom magazine

7. Environmental issues are huge. Create a clean-up group in areas around Ann Arbor that need help, such as bike paths, highways and under bridges.

8. Join a meditation group and/or karate class.

9. For me, getting outside is what helps eliminate loneliness.

When I was in high school we used to have huge parties and just hug all our buddies. Start a hug fest. A good old hug can kick the blues away for the day!

When my child Denali told me there was a loneliness epidemic, it blew my mind away. What I do know is that the truth is elusive. The COVID epidemic could not have helped and I think it's part of the issue. It was well-documented in the 1950s into the 80s that isolation is detrimental to human health, mental stability and well-being. What the pandemic did was isolate and demoralize people, and led the human mind into self-sabotage. It put people into a state where their fear is paralyzing. One of the only groups that got mega-paid was psychiatric counselors and therapists. The result was more pills and more dizzy brains.

Some people choose to be alone but this is not loneliness per se. I am a rather solitary person myself but it's a personal choice. I have many buddies to call and hang out with.

Here are my ways to combat loneliness:

1. Join a yoga class.
2. Contact an old, good buddy and hang out in person.

Fuller Bridge sweep reiterates need for shelter space

In 2019 I experienced homelessness and was living in the Delonis Center where I met my friend Tom (not his real name). Tom was a homeless schizophrenic who was sleeping under the Fuller Bridge located by the University of Michigan hospital. I slept there a few times. The tent was set up on concrete with bricks to hold down the corners. We slept on air mattresses to protect ourselves from the hard ground. They were comfortable until they sprang leaks. The train's roar as it passed under the bridge was startling and deafening. We woke in the morning to the sounds of rush hour traffic and went to the nearby St. Andrews Church/soup kitchen for breakfast.

Near the bridge are other encampments. Located in the trails and woods, the remnants of many generations of homeless citizens can be found. I once walked among the refuse. In it, I found things that were once important to someone: nice clothing, tons of personal hygiene items, bikes, camping gear and more, all in usable condition and simply left behind. Some things were deteriorated due to time. It was easy to see how long these places have been used out of desperate need for shelter.

Campsites like these are located all over Washtenaw County. There are popular ones that many people know about and use frequently. The Washtenaw County agency PATH (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness) places people in some of these sites. Still, most folks find them on their own, by word of mouth, or through community action groups like Washtenaw Camp Outreach. Sometimes they are on Department of Transportation property, sometimes on university property, and sometimes on private property. This is because there are no sanctioned and accessible places to camp or sleep when you have no permanent shelter.

The Delonis Center is very limited in capacity, given the size of the homeless population. There are no other shelters open year-round for single adults. Sleeping in tents is the closest thing some people have to safe, habitable shelter. Habitual means safe from cold and environmental hazards like bugs and animals. However, in a tent that is at a known location, personal safety from crime and violence cannot be guaranteed. This means tents are not adequate shelter. After an encampment has been noticed by the police or other authorities, they may take action by forcing camp-dwellers to move in what is known as a "sweep." Sweeps take away even the minimal safety of a tent.

People are often forced to abandon their property, including their tents and



JIM CLARK
Groundcover vendor No. 139



Demolished tent underneath Fuller Bridge after November 7 sweep.

bedding, leaving them no shelter. Because they have nowhere to go, the campers regroup under different bridges or return to the same one after some time has passed. Eventually, the sweep comes around again. Sweeps at Fuller Bridge have happened many times over the years.

The most recent time the Fuller Bridge camp was swept was November 7, 2023. This time the sweep was initiated by the Michigan Department of Transportation at the behest of Amtrak. According to the officials who conducted the sweep, the decision-makers for Amtrak were afraid for the safety of their passengers. The MDOT officials also had concerns for the safety of the trains and crews, about the fires campers lit for warmth, but also for the campers themselves.

Consider the following quote from the April 2023 revision of the "Trespass & Suicide Prevention Tool Kit" (<https://trespass toolkit.fra.dot.gov/eLib/>) which outlines an action plan for relocating homeless individuals from train tracks to a safer location. However, the approach is flavored by forcible removals, surveillance, and a tone of "homeless people are a nuisance."

"... in California's Santa Barbara County, a 2019 investigation found that a surge in rail-related deaths was tied to individuals living in encampments near the ROW. Twelve of 20 people killed over four years had been living in encampments, and more than half of these deaths were suicides. Encampments close to the tracks can also cause undue stress for train crew members who witnessed a previous train strike."

Groundcover News editor Cynthia Price was with the residents right before the November sweep, bringing them supplies. She shared with me what the residents said to her about it. "[They] sounded nonchalant and unthreatened, which seemed counterintuitive. They said MDOT bulldozed everything." What the resident meant by that is they used a Bobcat to doze under all their stuff at the bridge. "But they let [a couple of us] take some of our stuff because we were there after we got the notice. They didn't bulldoze our bikes," said

one of the residents.

As this was happening the Ann Arbor police also came on the scene. The AAPD tends to be sympathetic toward the unsheltered people in Washtenaw County. They know where the encampments are and who sleeps in them, and they prefer not to disturb them unless duty calls. In this case, they let the residents know they would have not made them leave. They helped, and told the residents, "If it was up to us we wouldn't do it, but we have to abide by MDOT."

The residents left the camp; they waited until later that night and went back.

Price said, "It's always been my impression that sweeps were a lot less

drastic than you would think. A lot of times people just go back right away. Also, some sweep notifications don't get acted on. In my view, it makes a difference in terms of where the population is and where they are relocated. Personally, this sweep meant it was slightly more dire to make sure they were warm enough. They had fires, which is one of the things MDOT was concerned about. Washtenaw Camp Outreach brought them propane and heaters but there were still fires before and after. Cold is a lot more serious when your only option for shelter is in a tent outside."

People who are homeless seek shelter in tents, cars, abandoned buildings, parks and under bridges and awnings. www.ypsilantinow.com

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There are potential issues with Ann Arbor's public bathroom pilot

Public bathrooms are crucial for everyone, but for those without a stable place to live, they can be a source of worry and stress. Imagine not having a bathroom to use whenever you need it — this is the reality for many homeless individuals.

One big concern is just finding a bathroom that's open and nearby. Homeless people often struggle to locate clean and safe bathrooms and sometimes have to plan their day around finding a place to use the restroom.

Cleanliness is a huge issue, too. Not all public bathrooms are well-maintained, and this can make homeless individuals worried about getting sick or catching infections.

Sometimes, there's no soap, toilet paper or even running water, which makes staying clean difficult.

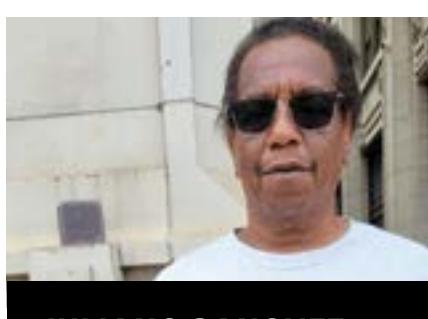
Privacy is also important. Imagine using a bathroom with no proper locks or partitions. For homeless folks, this lack of privacy can make them feel exposed or uncomfortable.

Feeling safe in a public bathroom is another worry. Sometimes these places can be dangerous because of

bathrooms will help alleviate some of the pressure placed on local businesses to provide publicly accessible restrooms to the homeless population.

However, one concerning detail is that the restrooms are stated to be accessible by scanning a QR code or by using a mobile app — something that some people who are unhoused or sight- or mobility-challenged may not possess, or feel comfortable using. This will potentially limit the claim by the City of Ann Arbor that these bathrooms can provide a "safe and dignified" option for all, regardless of housing status. It would be strange to limit one of the key demographics for this program in such a way, considering the program is likely driven by a desire to better serve that exact group of people.

There will be another communication about the pilot program in May where the final accessibility details will be explained. Hopefully, we will get some clarity then on how everyone will or will not be able to take advantage of these new bathrooms in June.



JULIANO SANCHEZ
Groundcover vendor No. 174

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TOOLS TO HELP

Winter STEAM

The Whittaker and Superior branches are hosting hands-on STEAM activities over the school break:

Dec. 26-28 & Jan 2-4: Superior

Dec. 26 & 28; Jan 2 & 4: Whittaker
Details at ypsilibrary.org/events.

FEATURED EVENT

BOARD GAMES & VIDEO GAMES

January 6 | 3:30-5:30pm

YDL-Superior (1900 Harris Rd.)



Join our building monitors Chris & Drew for an afternoon of fun, games, and snacks. With board games and video games, you're sure to have a good time!

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spiritual sign. Some people believe that seeing 12/21 repeatedly is a message from the universe or the angels, indicating harmony, optimism, idealism and family. These are the values that the Walk for the Homeless strives to promote and uphold.

If you are interested in joining or supporting the 1221 Walk for the Homeless, please contact the Rock Club Foundation on social media or visit their website.

Join the 12.21 Walk for the Homeless

ERICK BROWN
Groundcover vendor No. 617

On December 21st, the first day of winter and the longest night of the year, people across the country and around the world will participate in Homeless Remembrance Day, a time to honor and support the people who are experiencing homelessness.

Discrimination against the poor is a serious human rights issue that affects millions of people around the world. It manifests in various forms, such as denying access to education, health care, housing, social protection and justice. It also fuels stigma, prejudice and violence against people living in poverty.

The walk is part of a 20+ year tradition that the Rock Club Foundation and I have been organizing every year. I am a survivor of a traumatic brain injury and a passionate advocate for people who are different or marginalized. I'm also known for traveling across the country with my pet goat, Deer, and organizing events such as Bicycle Day and Earth Day.

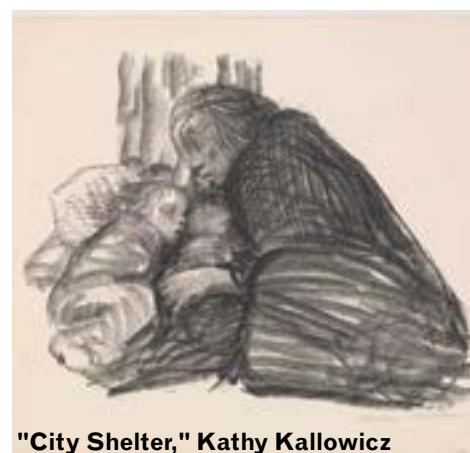
The walk aims to raise awareness and visibility for the rights and dignity of the homeless and to end discrimination against the poor. The organizers ask people to bring candles and a cup to give the candle a home, symbolizing the need for protection and warmth for everyone. They also ask people to bring signs or banners to speak up about the cause.

The Walk for the Homeless is a noble and compassionate initiative that deserves more attention and support. It is a way to remember the people who have died while living on the streets or in shelters and to show solidarity and empathy for the people who are still struggling. It is also a way to celebrate the resilience and strength of the human spirit, and to hope for a better future for everyone.

The organizers believe that poverty is not inevitable, but rather the result of unfair and unequal policies and practices that favor the wealthy and powerful at the expense of the poor and marginalized. They call for a just and inclusive economy that puts people and the planet at the center, and that respects the dignity and agency of everyone.

The organizers invite everyone who wants to participate in this event, even

Graci, Maralita!



"City Shelter," Kathy Kallowicz

AMANDA GALE
Groundcover vendor No. 573

Warning: This article contains explicitly Christian content. If you prefer not to read such articles, don't!

The holiday season can be a time both of great charity and benevolence, though also great scorn and injustice. Or perhaps it is just that the observable divide is just that much greater because "The Holidays" are supposed to be an occasion for our consciences to be even more understanding and giving than we're already supposed to be doing 365 days/year.

The starker contrast is when Christians are celebrating holidays with the themes of GOD's great mercy, love and grace to humanity, exemplified by a GOD WHO HIMSELF became the evil within us (2 Corinthians 5:21), to suffer on our behalf the punishment we inherited and merited (Romans 5:12, Romans 3:23-24).

The proclamation and model for responsibility and privilege to charity, peace, mercy and benevolence for each other is exemplified by this GOD WHO

would make HIMSELF HOMELESS at our rejection of HIM, and then nonetheless allow HIMSELF to SUFFER an also CRUEL and PAINFUL physical torture and death — all to redeem us.

However, how do "churchy" people live this out day to day — for the "least of these" (Matt 25:40) among us — the homeless, the unborn, children with cancer, people with diseases equivalent to the leprosy of JESUS' time, for the marginalized, the behavior challenged, the hurting, the afraid and the just plain "worn out"?

Maralita found herself a pregnant teenager one year during the holidays. What had she done? The "churchy" people around her gacked and glared; she knew the corner conversations she'd pass by were about her when the people quickly turned away. The "churchy" people did NOTHING to find out her needs or come to her aid. Her situation got worse; her "boyfriend" dumped her — the child surely wasn't his! Maralita then became homeless, traveling within her community, finally

If we realize that GOD loves us this much, how can we not actively SEEK how we can help others in the myriad of needs in our lost, fallen world. Are we "too good"? Do we care? Do we see CHRIST and Mary's face, in the face of countless others around us — those in need whom we can help or those blessing our needs and talents? And when we realize ourselves as the stranded people whom GOD reached out to spare — dare we not have compassion on our fellow humans, and even animals?

What if we each decided to be selfless as Mary and Joseph were, greet and accept the unplanned child, sacrifice for each other in love, not forsaking each other and like the Child who grew up to offer HIMSELF for our redemption — made sure to LIVE on mission with HIM, in gratitude to HIM and identifying care with our fellow humans? How could we do this? Receive HIM. Believe HIM. Always be on mission with HIM.

Maybe exactly the real problem is that we regard ourselves as if we are not ourselves in need and outcasts (Revelation 3:17) before a HOLY GOD and in our relationships with others. We're all too self-sufficient to be a part of JESUS' group and doings. If we partook, it might just expose our self-reliance and towers of achievement. However, JESUS identifies it is also exactly HIM to whom we are empowering, refusing relating or rejecting.

And dare we complain about all that is "wrong with" our world, while we do nothing that is actually bettering it? Is mercy and grace spreading everywhere we go? If not, what is? As long as we live on this Earth — it's NEVER TOO LATE to receive the grace we need, so that we can then give it to others (John 6:37). Really, we need fresh grace immersions daily for ourselves, so that our refreshing can then also bless others; we are and can only be as merciful to others to the extent we realize we are being shown mercy by a PERFECT GOD, WHO LOVES us, PERFECTLY.

Maralita was quite fortunate for being from the strict culture that she came from. Her boyfriend did return to her, to take care of her and her child. Though she and her family never completely regained the respect of that rigid, rules-based community, they were allowed to work and live in a fair amount of peace to themselves for years to come. What bothered Maralita and her family though, was realizing that there are so many homeless outcasts who experience shunning, rejection, no family and no means as she and her child had. Her child had to do something about that and grew up to be — among other things — a human rights advocate. And yet there's still need in this world.

At this point we must ask: What if GOD did this — for us? What if GOD decided to suffer the scorn and ridicule and rejection that Maralita and her son did? What if GOD suffers with us, for us, and really CARES about us? Will that make a difference in how we approach LIFE and what we invest in it for and how we view others? Do we not see CHRIST and Mary in Maralita and her son? (Surely "Maralita" is the name for Mary in some language.)

Will more churches open up for "The Homeless" this winter? (Only a few in the WHOLE County have thus far; is this acceptable to JESUS?) Is there still no room for HIM at "The Inn" of our hearts and our churches and our country? Why aren't more Christians actively involved for PRO-LIFE for EVERY LIFE in need of protection and mercy — from the womb to the tomb? Why are Christians not actively reaching out and being the connection — to a job (such as the gracious job wage giver in Matthew 10:15), a place of shelter, affordable housing, a warm cup of coffee with a friend, a caring, prayerful supportive network — to bring about victory at long last, from external oppositions or tough inner struggles. Meanwhile, real people are SUFFERING and DYING on the street corners in the most financially wealthy and most opportunity-blessed countries on this earth, while those with means and spiritual light content themselves by saying — "there's an agency for that!"

One time when a woman was being scolded for anointing the adult JESUS with expensive perfume, (so seeking to preserve HIS body, after HIS crucifixion — possibly understanding HE would rise after HIS death and so to seek to preserve HIS body, for that) HE asked a very powerful question to her critics, "Do you see this woman?"

As we observe the Holy Family and their sacrificial giving, their identification with human poverty, their investment for the greatest good, and especially Mary's special surrender to a really difficult life of social rejection, scorn, being misunderstood, outcast and not believed — for her and her son and family — shall we not feel a tug within us?

Graci, Maralita! For your great, humble acceptance to have your unplanned Child, who gave HIMSELF for us, and seeks to restore us and our world. And if Maralita with GOD's help in her day could succeed for LIFE-GIVING in the midst of such great opposition and obstacles; will not we?



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Mercy House is the place to be on Christmas Day



JOE WOODS
Groundcover vendor No. 103

It's the Christmas season, and when you think of Christmas time you think of movies like "A Miracle on 34th Street," "Charlie Brown's Christmas," "The Grinch," "It's a Wonderful Life" or "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" — all movies where the forces of good nature win out, with demonstrations of kind-heartedness towards someone and spreading happiness in the atmosphere.

When I think of Christmas, I think of the Christmas parties at the Mercy House on W. Huron St. down the street from the Delonis Center. They roll out the red carpet to spread Christmas cheer and genuine love to the homeless community.

Mercy House is a project of M.I.S.S.I.O.N., which is a non-profit started by Caleb Poirier and others like Brian Durrance, who are still involved.

Mercy House itself is a hospitality house started by owner Peggy Lynch and Sheri Wander. For people who don't know the background of Mercy House and/or M.I.S.S.I.O.N., they evolved from a project called Camp Take Notice which was a tent community governed by the homeless community who lived there. When Camp Take Notice was eliminated by the authorities, M.I.S.S.I.O.N. was formed to continue related work.

Peggy bought the house on W. Huron St. about 10 years ago. They serve meals there on Monday and Wednesday evenings and have a well-known Saturday breakfast. That breakfast all started from the spirit of Christmas.

One of Mercy House's other projects is to host a large Christmas party for the homeless and recently housed. Anyone really is welcome, and I'm only saying this based on my personal experience.

Before founding Mercy House, Peggy Lynch visited Camp Take Notice (the tent community), invited by a friend. She simply fell in love with the community, the environment and just being among humans.

After being engaged with the community for one year, she decided to have a Christmas party at her personal residence. For her, it was nothing out of the normal to host an event like this. It was a big Christmas party; everyone from the tent community was invited. She asked different friends of hers in different faith groups to help out and they were very excited to.

At one of the Christmas parties before they had the house of hospitality, Peggy noticed a person named Steve going on the back deck crying. As a good party hostess, she wanted to know what was going on with Steve. He said he was completely



Gracie Sheldon, David Williams, Peggy Lynch, Michael Clayton, Walter Harris and Alonzo Young on the porch of Mercy House on W. Huron Street. Photo credit: Joe Woods.

overwhelmed at the thought that he and other people from the camp community would be welcomed to someone's house for a Christmas party. That response had a very big impact on her, being a mom and a grandma. When I interviewed Peggy, she said being a part of a community and making an impact in it was very powerful for her.

She and her friend Sonya started having Sunday dinner at Camp Take Notice every single week, inviting people from the faith communities to join them. This still happens to this day with the every-other-week meals at M.I.S.S.I.O.N.'s Purple House or Wheeler Park, which alternate with Washtenaw Camp Outreach at Wheeler and in other locations during the winter.

Living in a world where one thing leads to the next, Peggy said that when you're a part of a community like this, you see where there is a gap. It could be someone who passed away and needs a proper burial, birthday celebration, wedding, someone who has a child and needs some clothes, someone pregnant and about to deliver and needs a baby shower to get necessary supplies, or just providing a space to observe, celebrate and become a tighter community together by bringing people together.

So with her genuine love for people, Peggy got more involved in helping what society considers the less fortunate or cast out, the homeless.

Peggy is a lawyer by occupation and because her heart was with the homeless community, she involved the wider community, including the corporation she works for. Peggy understood what being poor felt like, growing up very poor herself, going through college and getting married. Just like a lot of people in that situation, she tried hard to get out of it and became a workaholic. Although she was very successful in law and started her own law firm, she spent decades clawing her way out of poverty.

Then Peggy had an 'aha' moment where she felt she needed more in her life: she needed human relationships, she needed meaning. She started volunteering at numerous nonprofits.

someone else may think they need.

I chose this article, this organization and these people to interview in order to let Groundcover readers know that although Christmas is only celebrated once a year, M.I.S.S.I.O.N. consistently helps less fortunate people celebrate other holidays and just being in a community because of the love they have for people. At Christmastime, with the help of Peggy and those who help her turn it up 100 notches — there is delicious food, gifts large and small, music and fun — and they do it unselfishly without seeking approval from their peers or boasting for their own self-satisfaction.

They generally do it in silence, but more and more people know via word-of-mouth about the party, which is attended by 400 people or so. As Peggy says, this is what we as a civilization should do more of — be a blessing to your fellow brother or sister, show love from the heart and don't look at a person's financial or social status as much as at their being a human who deserves happiness.

St. Francis of Assisi Parish

"If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and am here; I did not come on my own, but he sent me."
+ Christ Jesus (John 8:42)

Come Worship With Us!

Mass Schedule

Saturday 5 pm (English) & 7 pm (Spanish)

Sunday 8:30 am, 10:30 am, 12:30 pm, 5 pm

2250 East Stadium Blvd., Ann Arbor
www.StFrancisA2.com 734-821-2100

A basketball Christmas

JOSHUA LEE
Groundcover contributor

As the NBA prepares to unwrap its 76th edition of Christmas Day games in the 2023-24 season, the hardwood spectacle transcends mere competition; it's a cherished tradition that showcases the best of basketball under the holiday lights. From humble beginnings in 1947, these Christmas Day matchups have evolved into a captivating saga, featuring iconic performances, intense rivalries and unforgettable moments.

Christmas games were more regional affairs in the early years, reflecting the league's grassroots connection with communities. The Chicago Stags faced off against the Providence Steamrollers in 1947. Reflecting on those times, former NBA Commissioner David Stern reminisces, "It was a way for the league to connect with fans, bringing the joy of basketball into homes during the holiday festivities."

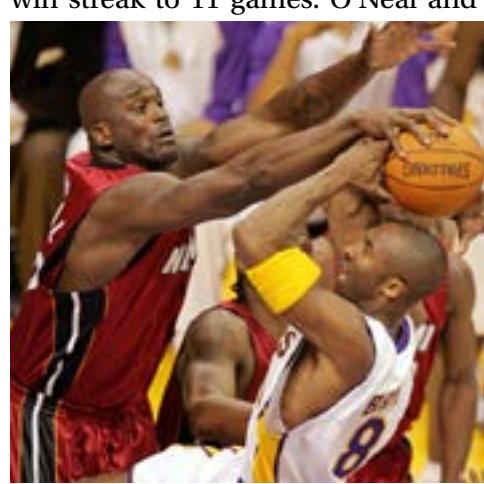
The NBA's Christmas Day contests have become a showcase for greatness, featuring legendary players leaving an indelible mark on the holiday hardwood. Wilt "The Stilt" Chamberlain's historic 1961 performance stands just as tall as the athletic giant himself, scoring 59 points and grabbing 36 rebounds in a double-overtime battle against the New York Knicks. Wilt's dominance remains a Christmas record to this day, a testament to his unparalleled skills on the court.

The 1984 matchup between the New York Knicks and the New Jersey Nets etched Bernard King into Christmas

Day lore. King's sensational 60-point performance, the highest ever on this festive occasion, illuminated the court even in a losing effort. His scoring spree joined the ranks of Chamberlain and Rick Barry, creating a trinity of 50-point Christmas Day legends.

Rivalries have added a layer of intensity to the holiday matchups. The 1995 Christmas Day game marked a Finals rematch between the Orlando Magic and the Houston Rockets. Penny Hardaway's clutch shot secured a narrow 92-90 victory for the Magic, showcasing the competitive spirit between star centers Shaquille O'Neal and Hakeem "The Dream" Olajuwon.

The 2004 Christmas clash between the Miami Heat and the Los Angeles Lakers brought the long-awaited faceoff between ex-superstar duo Shaquille O'Neal and the late Kobe Bryant. The game lived up to expectations, with the Heat securing a ruthless 104-102 victory in a forced overtime situation, extending their scorching hot win streak to 11 games. O'Neal and



Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant.

Bryant's duel added a dramatic chapter to the ongoing narrative of Christmas Day greatness.

The 2016 matchup between the LeBron "King" James and the Kyrie "Uncle Drew" Irving-led Cleveland Cavaliers and the five all-star Kevin Durant Death lineup Golden State Warriors was more than a game; it was a Christmas Day thriller between two super team behemoths.

Down 14 points in the fourth quarter, the Cavaliers rallied to a 109-108 victory, capped by Kyrie Irving's baseline drive into a fully contested spin move fadeaway for the game. Not to mention Uncle Drew's assassin-like game-winner was fully contested by elite shooting guard Klay Thompson who is highly decorated with multiple first-team all-defense selections. The heated rivalry between these two legendary teams turned Christmas Day into an unforgettable stage for epic comebacks and high-leverage moments.

In 2017, the Warriors and the Cavaliers continued their holiday rendezvous in a thrilling contest. The game featured a late-game surge by the Cavs, tying the score with an 11-2 run. However, Klay Thompson's clutch three-pointer with 1:33 left shifted the spotlight back to the Warriors, sealing their victory in another Christmas Day spectacle.

Adding a touch of whimsy to the holiday spectacle, the NBA's iconic Christmas commercials have become an integral part of the tradition. The most famous commercial, featuring hoops adorned with bells with players synchronizing their shots to the tune of "Jingle Bells," has become a nostalgic symbol of the season. The melding of sport and holiday cheer in these

commercials has resonated with fans, becoming a cherished component of the NBA's Christmas Day festivities.

While the games on Christmas Day provide exhilarating moments on the court, they also serve as a canvas for off-court festivities. Since 2009, Christmas Day broadcasts have featured a musical interlude, with Mariah Carey's iconic renditions of holiday classics becoming synonymous with NBA Christmas celebrations.



Mariah Carey

As most businesses and entertainment sources take Christmas off, the NBA's Christmas Day games have been solidified as a cornerstone of holiday sports entertainment. The rivalry-produced matchups continue to blend athletic prowess with the festive spirit, creating a unique and cherished tradition that resonates with basketball fans worldwide. As the 2023-24 season approaches, anticipation builds for the next chapter in the saga of NBA Christmas Day basketball, where the echoes of the past merge with the promise of new moments that will be etched into the annals of the sport's history.

Michigan vs. Everybody



MIKE JONES
Groundcover vendor No. 113

In the summer of 2023, I predicted the Michigan Wolverines, my favorite football team, would win the national college football championship. I was not the only person who made this prediction. Many other Michigan football fans, hopeful like myself, wished to see our Wolverines take it to another level. We must, in order to win the college football playoff game against our nemesis, the SEC Champion Alabama Crimson Tide.

Alabama is the next level. We beat Ohio State three years in a row, but we have yet to defeat the Crimson Tide in recent history. There is a saying: "To be the best you must first beat the best." The last time the two teams met was in the 2020 Citrus Bowl when Alabama beat the Wolverines 35-16.

The 13-0, number one Michigan Wolverines will face off with the 12-1, number four Alabama Crimson Tide in the Rose Bowl on Jan. 1. The Wolverines are a slim favorite to win the Rose Bowl. Head coach Jim Harbaugh, who recently served a

three-game suspension at the end of the regular season for allegedly using video to steal other teams' play signals, will lead the Wolverines into this epic battle: the College Football Playoffs.

A four-team playoff system leaves the 13-0 number two Washington Huskies to meet up against the 12-1 number three Texas Longhorns in the Sugar Bowl on Jan. 1. The winners of those two games will face off against one another in Houston for the national title on January 8. Go Blue!!!

Fun Facts: Michigan is ranked No. 1 in the Associated Press college football poll for the first time since it won its last national championship in 1997.

This Rose Bowl game will be the sixth meeting between Michigan and



Alabama.

Alabama leads the all-time series against Michigan, 3-2.

Michigan and Alabama are the two winningest football programs in the nation.

I'm dreaming of a colorful Christmas

PHILLIP SPINK
Groundcover contributor

It is absurd callousness,
A bleak ostracization,
That there is not reliably at least a bed in a dormitory
Closely available for every homeless person in our nation.

We say we are kind, with some perhaps thinking
that by denying people beds
And at times leaving them in cold torment and peril
We are only doing what we must
To encourage all to look for work.
But I think we are more deep-set on being punishers
Than conscious thought admits,
Of those seen as shiftless,
Or daring to be different dancers.

People can seldom be pained into working:
Certainly not when they are touched by insanity,
And still more not when they have chosen
To be drifters in the wind,
Whose fealty to dust, and sky, and wandering,
Likely irks many souls more dully settled in place.

We choose to believe that the homeless are spirits in dissolution,
Yet it is likely to some extent jealousy—
Discontent within our cages—
That turns us meanly judgemental.

Theorizing away compassion
Our boards and committees building newfangled shelters,
Often with a quite small number of beds for hundreds in need.
Even those caring most can be drawn in,
Turning their heads towards a temperate face of the same dark ignorance
Which keeps people passing cups, and hats, and cardboard signs of Veterans,
Without the drop of a dollar or dime,
Or even a moment of time for kind pleasantries.

It sometimes seems as though through some strange reversal of reason,
We feel we will be damned
If we do not struggle to ignore and to keep
Those not within some condoned and stamped parameter
In misery.

Evolution of my Christmas



JAMIE CAMERON
Groundcover vendor No. 612

Christian variety (gifts, goodwill, birth of Christ and the family Church Mass.)

As an adult, my celebration depended on how much money I had, buying gift cards as presents and getting together with family most of the time.

As I'm growing older, and my disabilities are likewise growing and I have no income, it's more about love, family and what I can create — helping to trim the tree, assisting in wrapping presents, creating my gifts, dining and spending time with family.

A few resolutions can't hurt, either. As I'm doing daily reading of the entire Bible, I'm keeping Christ in mind as my top priority.

Merry Christmas and happy holidays! You matter, and thanks to all of our supporters!

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here
423 S. Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104 734-665-6149
Bethlehem-ucc.org facebook.com/bethlehemuccA2

Bethlehem Church is home of the Groundcover office



DECEMBER 2023 EVENTS AT BETHLEHEM
Dec. 21 – The Longest Night Service 6:00 pm
Dec. 24 – Christmas Worship at 7:00 pm

Please visit the church website at: bethlehem-ucc.org for the most up-to-date calendar and event information.

Sunday Worship Time
10:00 am In-person
and via Live Stream and
Radio Broadcast



What are the holidays?

D.A.
Groundcover contributor

This is not intended to be offensive
And I am not your critic
Nor is this an attack on your beliefs
I'm just trying to understand
Why not visualize this perspective with me?
On TV you see ads with people gathered around as a family, around what is called a holiday
I never saw an ad that revealed what this "holiday" is like for those existing in "severe poverty"
I do not mean to ruin the mood for those who celebrate "holidays"
I only intend to state
A "holiday" to some do not bear the same meaning to me as they do for you
I'd be very much more impressed to see us celebrate life every day together
Simply be one great big family in harmony
This is what I await to see.

Life is good

LEAH SLUSKY
Groundcover vendor No. 619

When you dream
Dream with ease.
Place your hopes
With all of your dreams.
Place them deep
Inside your heart
And live your life
A work of art.

This poem is dedicated to my niece, Alexis, and nephew, Ethan. It is inspired by my first experience with Groundcover Newspaper at the Argus Farm Stop open-mic.

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WINTER PROGRAM INFORMATION DAY TIME WARMING SHELTER LOCATIONS:

Location	Address	Dates Available
Zion Lutheran Church (8am-3:30pm)	1501 W. Liberty Ann Arbor, MI 48103	Nov. 13, 2023 - Dec. 1, 2023
Ypsilanti Freighthouse (Mon.- Thur., 8am-6pm)	100 Market Place Ypsilanti, MI 48198	Nov. 13, 2023 - March 31, 2024
Delonis Center (Weekends only)	312 W. Huron St. Ann Arbor, MI 48103	Nov. 13, 2023 - March 31, 2024
Journey of Faith Church (8am-4pm)	1900 Manchester Road Ann Arbor, MI 48104	Dec. 4, 2023 - Dec. 15, 2023
First Baptist Church (8am-4pm)	517 E. Washington St. Ann Arbor, MI 48104	Dec. 18, 2023 - Dec. 29, 2023
St. Mary's Student Parish (8:30am-4pm)	331 Thompson St. Ann Arbor, MI 48104	Jan. 1, 2024 - Feb. 2, 2024
First Baptist Church (8am-4pm)	517 E. Washington St. Ann Arbor, MI 48104	Feb. 5, 2024 - Feb. 16, 2024
First Congregational Church (8:30am-3pm)	608 E. Williams St. Ann Arbor, MI 48104	Feb. 19, 2024 - March 1, 2024
Journey of Faith (8am-4pm)	1900 Manchester Rd. Ann Arbor 48104	March 4, 2024 - March 29, 2024

Unless otherwise specified, all above warming shelters operate Monday through Friday. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact the Delonis Center at 734-662-2829.

For updates, visit bit.ly/washtenaw-warming.



For updates and more information:
bit.ly/washtenaw-warming



OVERNIGHT SHELTER INFORMATION

Winter shelter information: Winter daytime and overnight shelter accommodations are available throughout the winter shelter season from **November 13, 2023 - March 31, 2024** for any individual seeking emergency shelter during the cold winter months.

- Daytime shelter** - Monday - Thursday, 8am - 6pm at the Ypsilanti Freighthouse (100 Market Place, Ypsilanti, MI 48198)
- Overnight shelter** - Nighttime accommodations are at the Delonis Center: 312 W. Huron St., Ann Arbor, and at offsite locations including Congregation partners throughout the County, and there is an overnight shelter in Ypsilanti. During day-time hours, those seeking overnight shelter should first contact HAWC to obtain a referral for shelter at 734-961-1999. If it is after 5pm or weekend, please come to the Delonis Center or call the Delonis Center at 734-662-2829 and we'll assist with ensuring you're served and provide transportation to an offsite location if needed.

How do I get into the shelter?

Any individuals seeking emergency shelter please contact Housing Access of Washtenaw County (HAWC) at 734-961-1999 to obtain a referral to the Delonis Center. If it is after 5pm or weekend, please come to the Delonis Center and we'll assist ensuring you're served. Families, please contact HAWC to be referred to appropriate shelter resources.

What is provided at the shelter?

Individuals are provided a safe place to sleep each night and can access a wide variety of services including meals, case management, medical care, and most importantly help finding permanent housing.



Sudoku ★★★★★ 4puz.com

			6	9					2
5	3	2						4	
4					1	6			
6			5	7				8	
		5				4			
1				4	8			9	
	4	1						3	
5					2	1	4		
9				3	5				

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover is a non-profit, and paper vendors are self-employed contractors, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

- I agree to treat all customers, staff, and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- Groundcover will be a voluntary purchase. I agree not to ask for more than the cover price or solicit donations by any other means.
- When selling Groundcover, I will always have the current biweekly issue of Groundcover available for customer purchase.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor in downtown areas. I will also abide by the Vendor Corner Policy.
- I understand that Groundcover strives to be a paper that covers topics of homelessness and poverty while providing sources of income for the homeless. I will try to help in this effort and spread the word.
- If you would like to report a violation of the Vendor Code please email contact@groundcovernews.com or fill out the contact form on our website.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcover vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended.

'Tis the Season Peter A. Collins

ACROSS

- Relative of Jethro and Elly May
- Atlanta-based federal health org.
- Sudden outburst
- "Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee" boxer
- London district
- Pretender
- Gem State pageant winner
- Popular photo-sharing app, for short
- Menorahs, essentially
- In a bad mood
- Hawaii or Alaska on a US map, often
- Neckwear
- Family __
- Atlantic fish
- Cold War empire: Abbr.
- Suffix for orange or lemon
- Nephew of Donald Duck
- Apple devices run on it
- Phone features
- FDA-banned weight-loss supplement
- Russian secret police, initially
- Urban blight
- Tactful
- Elementary particle
- Sonar signal
- Crop pest genus
- Letter-shaped bolt fastener
- "__ kingdom come ..."
- Unemotional
- Owl sounds
- Phrase often heard this time of year
- Blood of the gods, in Greek myth
- Traveler's repository
- Oteri, formerly of "SNL"
- Mouriful cry
- Decorative vase
- Speaker of the circled phrases in the grid
- Complex guy?
- Deli loaf
- Pakistani language
- Prelude to a tan

DOWN

- Copier problem
- Football's Manning
- Unit of resistance
- Boxing match ender, for short
- Trigger of plant defenses
- Triceratops, for one
- Lop-sided victory
- Picnic pests
- 1862 Civil War battle site
- Moral standards
- Latin dance
- Character in "Wreck-It Ralph"?
- "The House at ___ Corner" (A.A. Milne book)
- Sleightful for 61-Across
- Damascus nation
- Oscar-winning actress Berry
- Huron, Michigan
- Damp, as grass
- Puffy do
- Final (like this clue!)

The Angel

BILLY HILLIUS



The Face from Billy Hillius

Date pudding



KEN PARKS
Groundcover vendor No. 490

This is a favorite of the Parks, enjoyed at all major family holidays and birthday celebrations!

Pudding:

1 cup brown sugar
1 cup flour
1 tbsp butter
½ cup milk
1 tsp baking soda
1 ½ cups pitted dates
½ cup chopped walnuts or pecans

Syrup:

1 cup brown sugar



1 ½ cup boiling water
1 Tbsp butter
1 Tbsp vanilla

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
Mix together all pudding ingredients except nutmeats and put into a buttered baking dish. Sprinkle nuts over the top.
Mix syrup ingredients together. Pour the syrup over the batter and bake for 30 min. Serve with whipped cream. Raisins may be used instead of dates.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

7	1	6	9	5	4	8	3	2
5	3	2	8	6	7	9	4	1
4	8	9	2	3	1	6	7	5
6	4	3	5	7	9	1	2	8
8	9	5	3	1	2	4	6	7
1	2	7	6	4	8	3	5	9
2	6	4	1	8	5	7	9	3
3	5	8	7	9	6	2	1	4
9	7	1	4	2	3	5	8	6



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Potato candy



ERICK BROWN
Groundcover vendor No. 617



Potato candy is a simple and delicious treat that my mom used to make when I was growing up.

Ingredients:

1 small potato, peeled and cooked
4-5 cups of powdered sugar
1/4 cup of creamy peanut butter
A pinch of salt
A dash of vanilla extract (optional)

Directions:

Mash the potato in a large bowl until smooth and lump-free.
Add 2 cups of powdered sugar and mix well. The mixture will be sticky at this point. Add more powdered sugar, one cup at a time, until the mixture is thick and stiff, like cookie dough.

Sprinkle some powdered sugar on a large sheet of wax paper and transfer the dough onto it.

Roll out the dough into a thin rectangle, about 1/4 inch thick.

Spread the peanut butter evenly over the dough, leaving a small border around the edges.

Starting from one of the long sides, roll up the dough tightly, using the wax paper to help you.

Wrap the log in wax paper and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or until firm.

Cut into thin slices and enjoy!

This recipe makes about three dozen pieces of potato candy. You can store them in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to a week. I hope you like this recipe and have a sweet day!

Deck the Halls!

Shop at the Kiwanis Thrift Sale!

Holiday Gifts, Decorations, Tree Sale

November 3 - December 30

Toy Sale

November 24 - December 30

**Fridays from 9 am - 1 pm and
Saturdays from 9 am - 3 pm**



**Kiwanis
Thrift Sale**

Kiwanis Center in Scio Township

100 N Staebler Rd off Jackson Rd

Official Sponsor of Warm the Children

Kiwanis will be open for normal business hours through the 2023 holiday season